

The Middleborough Antiquarian

Devoted to the preservation of local history by

MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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OUR PART IN OUR NEW MUSEUM

There is more zest for living in Middleboro as we become more and more aware of the interesting and even exciting events that have gone into making our town what it is today. These events from out of our past are like the seasoning in a culinary masterpiece that gives it its delightful flavor.

Nothing can take the place of an Historical Museum for bringing out into public view the historical items and memorabilia that adds the savor to our lives. For this reason each one of us should ask "How can I share?"

The most obvious answer is by sharing financially. The Museum Committee is in need of another \$5,000 immediately to complete the restoration of the first house and to do such repairs as a new roof and new windows in the second house to protect it from the elements.

First of all, it should be remembered that this is a COMMUNITY project. The new Museum will be for the benefit of ALL residents of our community. And only as the WHOLE community shares in this effort, shall we ALL be able to point to the new Museum as OUR CONTRIBUTION to a better way of life in Middleboro.

Our gifts to the Museum can be larger, probably, if we make them payable over a period of time. The Museum Committee has already received some pledges of spaced payments, and welcomes this type of gift. All gifts, whether small or large, are helping us to make our Museum a reality. Remember, too, financial aid to the Museum is tax deductible.

You are probably familiar with the Bible quotation, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In common everyday language this means that our financial help, if it is significant to us, carries our INTEREST with it.

This brings up the second --- and just as important way, that we can share in the new Museum. We can share our interest and time in terms of imagination, leadership and work. We need to have more and more people in the community really interested in the Museum. We can all help in this.

If every member of the Historical Association were to talk to ten friends and pass on to them their own excitement and en-

*
* ANNUAL MEETING *
*
* Monday, June 5, 1961 *
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* Junior High School Musicorium *
*
* 8:00 P. M. *
*
* ENTERTAINMENT *
*
* REFRESHMENTS *
*

thusiasm, public interest in the Museum would mount more rapidly. This would help in a very real way to reach sooner our financial goal, which is important.

But even more important, we would reach the goal of having a community that reaches down into its past and takes out the pride and resourcefulness of those days to inspire us to greater achievement today.

Harold A. Hall

MORE ACQUISITIONS

FOR THE MUSEUM

GREAT AND SMALL

Perhaps the largest, and surely the heaviest, object acquired recently by the Historical Museum is an enormous iron kettle for boiling whale oil; and among the smallest is a shark's tooth. Due to the generosity of the Board of Directors of Montgomery Home, there have been placed on the grounds of the Museum three unique and historical items. All these objects were in the Memory Garden of Mrs. Edith Finney at the Montgomery Home. Mrs. Finney collected for this garden stones, plants and various objects from far and wide. There was grading and reseeding to be done at the Home, and the Board of Directors thought it advisable to have the objects removed.

We have not as yet learned how Mrs. Finney came into possession of the whaling kettle, but her sister was the wife of Mr. George Fox Tucker, whose family lives in New Bedford, and who was much interested in and authority on whaling lore, and was the author of a book for young people, "The Boy Waleman." It would not be surprising if the kettle was obtained through some of these New Bedford Connections.

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ACQUISITIONS

from page 1

Another object of interest is a very large granite block with an iron ring which was used as a hitching block for his horses by Thomas S. Peirce.

The third object draws the most attention. It is a boulder with a bronze plaque dedicating the boulder to Richard Warren, the Revolutionary ancestor of Countess Magri, whose service in the Revolution made it possible for Countess Magri to become a member of the Daughters of the Revolution. This boulder was dedicated at an interesting ceremony on October 31, 1915, which was Countess Magri's seventy fourth birthday. The ceremony was held at Countess Magri's home on Summer Street, where the Boulder stood in the yard until the homestead was sold after her death, when Mrs. Finney gained permission to move it to Montgomery Home.

There were several State officers of the Daughters of the Revolution in attendance at the exercises. Mr. George W. Stetson gave the address of the afternoon, there was music by Carl Oaks' orchestra and remarks by many of the dignitaries present.

It seems particularly fitting that this boulder should be placed on the grounds of the new Historical Museum which will house the unique and interesting collection of General and Mrs. Tom Thumb memorabilia.

Mertie E. Witbeck.

HIGGINS COLLECTION

Mrs. A. Whitman Higgins of Highland Road, Rock, has just presented to the Museum Mr. Higgins' collection of early American tools, buttons, guns, instruments and memorabilia in a dozen other fields of Americana.

Many groups representing one craft or trade have been mounted on plaques for exhibition. The button collection, for example, is so mounted that the student can follow designs from the Revolution to the beginning of the 20th century.

This collection will be housed in one room of the Museum as the A. Whitman Higgins collection. Its educational importance is invaluable, and we are justly proud and sincerely grateful.

In the next issue, after we have had time to examine the many exhibitions, we will try to give further details.

THANKS

To all of the members who have contributed time and energy getting the Museum grounds cleaned up. Gradually they are getting a cared-for look. As construction work on the outside is completed, all scrap materials will be disposed of. Planting for the front is already planned by the Garden Club.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE TINKHAM FAMILY

Conjectures & Interpretations

by

L. Charles Judge & L. B. Romaine

(See Antiquarian, Vol. 1 #4, page 1 and Vol. 2 #3, insert page 5.)

No history is, or ever will be complete in the full sense of the word. It is, therefore the duty of the periodical to collect and contribute selected manuscript ignored and neglected by others for future historians.

Although Thomas Weston's "History of the Town of Middleboro" lists nineteen Tinkhams, as pointed out in previous Antiquarians, Levi Tinkham and his family were apparently not considered important enough for inclusion. This is typical of the average historian -- generals, politicians and millionaires must go down in history; the men who invented milling machines and made most of the town's pumps, the craftsman who supplied the foundries with patterns and flasks, and the men who through the years made the United States the top industrial nation in the world are seldom mentioned.

Thanks to Miss Gertrude W. Dexter of Beverly, Mass., Levi Tinkham's great granddaughter, we are able to study another of his diaries. He has come a long way since his notes on his Almanac for 1796 and his daily recordings for 1803 to 1815. He is about 85 years old, and his life revolves around the doings of his "boys", Josiah and Charles. One can read his disgust sitting around doing nothing, dreaming, perhaps, of his own active days when he put a wildcat on Thomas Weston's forge and built the hearse for the First Precinct, "to be built in the form of the one at Pembroke."

The small 7" x 8" calf bound account book was purchased: "Bought of Col. P. H. Peirce May 8th 1850 - Price 25¢"; this is neatly recorded on the fly-leaf.

The diary starts July 20, 1850. Loaded with farm doings, visits and local news of illness and death, accurate weather reports, and as one might expect, a vivid and intimate picture of life in New England in 1850, it is no easy task to choose the entries that should be printed and broadcast. The following would seem to be worthy, and we present them as written.

"Dec. 1850. Josiah went to burying hill to help set up stone posts for a fence round the hill -- Boys drew few more stones for the hogyard.

"Feb. 22, 1851. Chas. went to mill and changed my library book for Conquest of Florida. Have a bad cold coming on. Josiah in blacksmith's shop making a wagon body and irons.

"April 24, 1851. Sophy Barrows and Reland & his son came here ---- heard that Edmund Thompson's cow has brought a very strange calf with one body and two heads - dead of course.

Continued on page 3

TINKHAM DIARY
from page 2

"June 14 1851. Josiah and Charles went to Earl Sproats with bed screws and rollers to move a barn.

"Nov. 8th, 1851. Josiah and Charles went this forenoon to help raise and hang the new bell in place of the old one broke at Mr. Putnam's Meeting House.

"May 1, 1852. Bought first herrings. Six for 9¢.

"June 4, 1852 Foster and Israel Thompson bot a Cupolo Furnace. Josiah finished his pump and carried it by horse to Foster's Furnace. Brought in a pine log 40 feet long and 13 - 14 inches at top.

"July 16, 1852. Josiah and Charles went to fix pump for Col. Peirce. (Is this the very tired old wood pump now in the museum? The one we rescued from under the old barn on Jackson Street just before it was torn down?) Josiah brought in another log and Charles is boring it.

"Aug. 1st - Sunday. We are all at home as usual to our shame be it said!

"Aug. 9, 1852. Charles brought home a whole load of flasks for patterns for Josiah to make new ones from. Mended flasks and then went with load of old flasks to the furnace and came home with more planks (for flasks).

(Note: Flasks are containers in which sand is rammed to form a mold in foundries.)

"Oct. 7th. Josiah and Charles at work as usual with their everlasting flasks. Josiah to four corners and brought home a little news print called the Nemasket Gazette printed today, it being the first number at one dollar a year in advance. (This is the only record of the day of first issue as far as we know. Weston merely says 1852.)"

I wish we had time and space to reprint only the amusing and interesting comments. These samplings hardly do the old gentleman justice.

During 1853 Josiah entertained a tin peddler and did some trading. He apparently mended his wagon and "took tinware for pay."

At other times the boys were busy making baskets and axletrees, and Levi mended washing machines for Col. Peirce and Abiel Washburn and others.

He spent one evening with Alfred Wood looking over a bundle of papers in which were recorded the genealogies of a great many families.

Josiah made "machines" he called capstans (for whalers??) and Levi writes that he doesn't know "what in the world they are for."

In April, just for comparison with these atomic push-button days, Josiah made two stone drags out of crotched trees for hauling walnut logs for axles, getting planks for flasks and hauling flasks to the furnace.

He describes several "tough old-fashioned snow storms" that lasted several days after which Charles had to beat tracks with the oxen.

He describes funeral processions, notably for Mr. Putnam and Edward Sparrow. Most of his friends died at about 85 years of age.

Many of his friends are indexed in Weston's History and mentioned for various military and political accomplishments.

The province of such diaries is to pinpoint local history and record it in its proper setting, so that the reader realizes the comparative importance of town meeting day, the fair at Bridgewater, herring at 6 for 9¢, Col. Peirce's pumps, patterns and flasks for Foster's Furnace, the tin peddler's visit and a funeral procession.

Though friends fell off hay wagons, and were drowned in the river fishing, having had some kind of a fit, just as they do today, the careful recordings present a scene difficult to appreciate in the cold factual type of most history. Perhaps we are strange birds, but I think we can almost feel ourselves sitting with Mr. Tinkham in June 1853 as he writes:

"A peddler stayed here with his horse last night -- cloudy but no storm -- Chas. at work on his everlasting pumps and flasks -- paid interest on the note -- So ends this journal."

If I ever reach 87, I hope I can still see, read and write half as well.

The last writing on the end-paper shows the impossible-to-imagine changes that have come to New England living:

"Money paid in the year 1850. . .	44.55
Money received	64.87
	\$20.32"

Should we call the Federal Income Tax Bureau -- or let him rest in peace?

SUGGESTION

Why not start an "Every Member Get A Member" Campaign? There are many people in Middleboro who are interested, but who have had an idea that they must be "invited" to join. If we let these people know that all they need to do is to say they would like to join, and pay the dues for members of \$2.00, then we should get many more to join with us.

The Program Committee will be working in the Summer months to set up some really interesting meetings for our next season.

"June 10, 1881. Josiah and Charles went to
Lark Springs with bed screens and rollers
to make a beam.

"Nov. 8th, 1881. Josiah and Charles went
this forenoon to help Kate and Mary the
new bell in place of the old one given by
Mr. Putnam's Mother House.

"May 1, 1882. Bought first horse, six
for \$4.

"June 1, 1882. Foster and James Thompson
and a couple of farmers, Josiah finished
happily and carried by horse to Foster's
farmhouse. Present in a pine log to
long and 13 - in inches at top.

"July 10, 1882. Josiah and Charles went to
the new for Col. Peirce. (In this the way
the old wood pump now in the house.
The more reason for why the old pump
as Jackson Street just before it was torn
down. Josiah brought in another log and
Charles the boring it.

"Aug. 1st - Sunday. We are all at home as
usual to our share to it with.

"Aug. 3, 1882. Charles brought home a whole
load of flasks for Josiah to
make new ones from. He had flasks and
then went with load of old flasks to the
foundry and came home with more flasks
(for flasks).

(Note: Flasks are containers in which sand
is rammed to form a mold in foundries.)

"Oct. 7th. Josiah and Charles at work as
usual with their everlasting flasks. To-
day for four corners and brought home a
little news print called the Western Ga-
zette printed today. It being the first
number at one dollar a year in advance.
(This is the only record of the day of
first issue as far as we know. Western
Gazette says 1882.)"

I wish we had this and were to reprint
only the amusing and interesting comments.
These samplings hardly do the old gentle-
man justice.

During 1883 Josiah entertained a fair and
also did some trading. He apparently
mended his wagon and "took time" for
pay."

At other times the boys were busy making
benches and axles, and left mended
washing machines for Col. Peirce and Adol-
phus and others.

He spent one evening with Alfred Wood
looking over a bundle of papers at which
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many families.

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Hattie's dress. Josiah's wife, Josiah's
flasks for flasks and needles flasks to
the furnace.

He described several "rough old-fashioned
snow shovels" that lasted several days at-
ter which Charles had to break tracks with
the wheel.

He described several personal possessions, notably
for Mr. Putnam and Edward Spence. Most
of his friends died at about 85 years of
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are strange birds, but I think we can af-
fect local ourselves sitting with Mr.
Timothy in June 1883 as he writes:

"A peddler stayed here with his horse last
night -- already but no more -- Chas. at
work on his everlasting pump and flasks --
paid interest on the note -- So ends this
journal."

If I ever reach 87, I hope I can still
see, read and write half as well.

The last writing on the endpaper shows
the responsible-to-writing changes that
have come to New England living:

"Money paid in the year 1880. . . \$1.75
Money received . . . \$1.75
\$33.75"

Should we call the Federal Income Tax
year -- or let him rest in peace?

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Why not start an "Every Member Get A Mem-
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vited" to join. If we let these people
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they would like to join, and pay the dues
for members of \$2.00, then we should get
many more to join with us.

The Progress Committee will be working in
the summer months to set up some really
interesting meetings for our next season.